

From: [Les Stevens](#)
To: [A303 Sparkford To Ilchester](#)
Cc: [Les Stevens](#)
Subject: Deadline 4 Submission on behalf of West Camel Parish Council
Date: 08 March 2019 10:16:10
Attachments: [Deadline 4 \(08 03 19\) Written Submission to PINS on behalf of West Camel Praish Councils LS V2 draft 05 03 19.pdf](#)

Dear Sir/Madam,

Please find attached a further submission on behalf of West Camel Parish Council.

Kind regards.

Les Stevens
Clerk to West Camel Parish Council

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WRITTEN SUBMISSION ON BEHALF OF WEST CAMEL PARISH COUNCIL.

Following the Issue Specific Hearings (26/02 – 01/03), West Camel Parish Council wish to make the following additional comments and reinforce some areas highlighted in earlier written submissions.

Quite clearly from the incisive questions asked of the Applicant at these hearings, the Examining Authority (ExA) fully appreciates the shortcomings in the scheme as presented to the DCO process.

The Applicant was unable to articulate any benefits, maintaining an intransigent attitude and appearing totally focused on achieving project 'milestones', at the expense of delivering an 'holistic' solution, that would not only meets the goals of improving connectivity to the South West, but also protect and preferably enhance the lives of the communities and businesses bordering the scheme.

The Applicant also appears to be prepared to squander the opportunity to design and deliver a solution that meets the future requirements as articulated centrally by Highways England, which would allow a seamless upgrade of the proposed dual carriageway to 'Expressway Status'.

The statement made by H.E.'s Counsel during the Hearings, that alternative routes for traffic barred from a future 'Expressway' could use existing local infrastructure, not necessarily parallel with this section of the A303, sounds like a willingness to compound already highly contentious traffic levels on the unclassified road network through our communities!

Current proposals fall well short of Highways England's stated goals of improving access time to businesses in this area of South Somerset. It is clear from the Applicant responses to ExA questions that the most likely impact on nine of the businesses bordering this section of the A303 will be detrimental and in several cases may well force their closure. The loss of these businesses will impact adversely on local communities, both in terms of local employment and loss of amenity. Similarly the local communities of West Camel, Queen Camel and Sparkford are likely to be left to bear the legacy of this 'flawed' scheme, with increased traffic flows and higher accident rates.

1. Traffic Mitigation West Camel Village – pre-construction.

Highways England (H.E.) have so far declined to 'firm-up' their offer made some months ago to fund a Traffic Calming Scheme in West Camel Village and have, furthermore, used quite threatening language in their response to this issue, to the effect that funding will not be included as a legal requirement attached to the DCO and may well exclude accessing their 'Discretionary Fund'.

On behalf of the community of West Camel, the Parish Council merely seek to secure the best possible outcome for their parishioners and in particular the majority who reside in the village of West Camel who are directly affected by existing and forecast increases in 'rat-running' traffic.

Although HE maintain that their scheme will only increase traffic volumes through the unclassified roads of West Camel by 600 vehicle journeys per day (a 33% increase), they conveniently overlook that they baselined an already unacceptable situation. West Camel Parish Council strongly believes that such a large expenditure of public taxpayer money should, quite reasonably, protect and improve, rather than degrade the lives of people in local communities bordering the scheme.

Closure of Plowage Lane for the duration of the construction period.

The possibility of closing Plowage Lane at its junction with the existing A303 for the entire period of construction works was raised and discussed briefly at ISH2 (27/2/19) and the Applicant appeared receptive to this proposal.

West Camel Parish Council strongly urge ExA and the Applicant to close off Plowage Lane and Howell Hill for the duration of the works and introduce village gateways to both locations once these access points are reinstated.

We would very much like to see this initiative included in future iterations of the 'Outline Traffic Management Plan' as the only effective way of mitigating excessive traffic volumes in Plowage Ln, Keep St and Fore St, during the planned 18 month closure of Howell Hill. Council would request that the closed off section of Plowage Ln is not utilised by the HE contractor as a potential 'work site' (Article 15 (2) of the DCO Application).

2. Changes / Clarification on elements of design detail.

Drainage Works – Steart Hill area. In 2.11 Outline Drainage Works Plans, Drawing 2 of 4, it would appear that elements of the proposed drainage works around Steart Hill and the new connecting carriageway, drain via a proposed culvert under the dual carriageway into existing surface water drains in Howell Hill and thus adding to the discharge rate into the River Cam.

West Camel has a history of flooding and several local schemes have previously been instigated to mitigate the risk of future flooding. H.E. proposals have indicated that all surface water discharge from their proposed scheme will discharge into the River Cary NOT the River Cam. Perhaps the Applicant could clarify this point and reassure Council that either the drawing mentioned has been mis-interpreted or amend their proposals to ensure that no additional surface water is directed towards the River Cam.

Creation of a 'Village Gateway' east of the Downhead overbridge. Council request that as part of the detailed design a formal 'Village Gateway', including signage and road narrowing, be created to the east of the mini-roundabout at the southern side of the Downhead Overbridge. This would help reinforce the proposed 30mph speed limit and prepare drivers for entering a 'Traffic Calmed' area.

Speed limit on retained de-trunked A303 (B3151?) east of the mini roundabout on the southern side of Downhead overpass. – Council would like to see a 40mph speed limit on this section of retained highway and continue along the B3151 to 'Stockwitch Cross' where a recently reduced limit of 30mph has been introduced. SCC has already introduced a 40mph limit for this road to the West of the airbase onwards to Ilchester and this should be mirrored to the east.

Plowage Lane 7.5 tonne weight limit – Council request that the current weight restrictions in place on Howell Hill, Parsonage Rd and the West Camel – Bridgehampton Rd be extended to include Plowage Ln, Keep Street, Fore St and Chantry Ln. Council would seek to see this extension implemented under Traffic Mitigation proposals with SCC and hopefully funded by HE either as a formal DCO requirement or from their 'Discretionary Fund'.

Bund 4 Gap - acoustic impact on West Camel village. Council would like to highlight the apparent lack of acoustic bunding in the area of 'Bund 4' to the West of the new connection into Howell Hill. It appears from drawings that anti-dazzle fencing is proposed but no acoustic bund from where the proposed road emerges from the cutting to the West of Howell Hill.

Council would like to see this omission rectified to protect both the adjacent properties and the main body of the village to the south of this point.

Accident Record at Parsonage Rd / West Camel Rd Crossroads. – Action Point 13 from the recent list of Hearings Action Points, requests SCC (Somerset County Council) to provide the ExA with a record of accidents at this junction. West Camel PC would add that the SCC record is derived from Police Reports and that increasingly the Police decline to attend accidents unless personal injury is involved. We strongly suspect that even local records are substantially incomplete with reports of only the more serious accidents being passed to the clerk. There are numerous reports of near misses, some of which are backed by 'Dash-Cam' evidence.

We have some 14 separate incidents (since July 2014) recorded to varying degrees, some backed by photographic evidence while others are verbal reports.

Retention of the old A303 as a 'local parallel road' – Although HE / Mott-Mac have stated that there is insufficient room to build a parallel road to standard width, Mr Bryan Norman's latest submission explains, in detail, how this can still be achieved, by scheduling the construction of carriageways and reducing the width of the parallel road once traffic has been moved onto the new northern dual carriageway.

Retention of the old A303 de-trunked road and providing the missing 0.9km of new local carriageway will solve so many of the issues discussed during the Hearings –

- Ease of construction for main contractor
- A better experience for ALL A303 road-users during construction
- Cheaper construction
- Faster construction
- Less environmentally intrusive (no temporary haul routes required)
- Supports existing businesses along the old A303 which in turn supports local communities.
- Negates the need (in most cases) to leave 'stopped off' sections of old A303 which are liable to fly-tipping and other anti-social behaviour as well as ending the impasse of who pays to maintain these area.
- Reduces significantly the need for road closure on main A303 during construction
- Solves access problems to Blackwell Farm and the need for alterations in Traits Ln.
- Provides agricultural access to fields that will otherwise be inaccessible to modern farming machinery.
- Supports future upgrade to Expressway
- Provides a 'local road' for NMUs and agricultural users
- Provides resilience in time of accident / repair works
- Opens the possibility of saving the cost by removing the proposed East-bound Downhead junction which would not be required.

3 Hazelgrove (Sparkford) Junction). – As stated in earlier submissions and voiced at recent Hearings, Council maintains its position of questioning the unorthodox design and layout of the proposed Hazelgrove junction. We believe the alternative outline design suggested by Mr Bryan Norman and 'proof-of-concept' verified by Fairhurst, has a number of advantages over the current HE design put forward under the DCO -

- i. It will destroy far less of the (Listed) Hazelgrove parkland, estimated at around half of the Applicant proposals.
- ii. it will decrease the length of journeys to and from Hazelgrove School.
- iii. It will decrease the distance travelled by traffic joining the eastbound carriageway of the A303 from the A359 (south).
- iv. It will discourage such traffic from taking a short cut through the middle of Sparkford village.
- v. It will keep east bound A303 traffic at this junction and avoid use of the east bound junction above West Camel (Downhead Junction).

4. Proposed diversion via A359 – Clearly from answers (or lack of) at the Hearings, HE are unable, at this time to articulate how their ultimate Traffic Management Plan (TMP) will control diverted traffic 'rat-running through the local highway network, much of which is unclassified.

After hearing the Applicant's answers to ExA questions on this area, West Camel Parish Council remain highly sceptical that the Applicant's final TMP will safeguard the people of our communities during the whole 2 ½ - 3 years of the construction phase and especially during the summer holiday

period. The potential 'nightmare' of A303 road-closure periods will be intolerable as will exceptional times such as Yeovil Air Day, Glastonbury and any closure of the M5 which always results in huge increases in traffic volumes using the A303..

In addition, the proposed reduction in speed limit to 40mph for the duration of the works will also add to traffic volumes seeking alternative routes, increasing rat running through local unclassified roads.

Conclusion – West Camel Parish Council have throughout the 'Consultation Process' remained fully supportive of the need to dual this section of the A303. However, we strongly believe that in an urgency to meet their own self-imposed timeframe, Highways England have sacrificed both economic and holistic opportunities that would deliver a quality, long term road solution at the least cost to the taxpayer. We further believe that the changes requested are not as major as H.E. profess and that they could easily be accommodated within the existing DCO timeframe.

However, should Highways England maintain their current intransigent position, West Camel Parish Council strongly suggest that the current DCO should be withdrawn and an amended design resubmitted, in a timely manner, that shows proper consideration for the immediate vicinity , non-trunk road users and local communities for the next 25 years.

Les Stevens
Clerk to West Camel Parish Council